

(Do Not Write Above This Line)

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE DISTRICT TWO RAIL CORRIDOR ASSESSMENT.

FINAL COUNCIL ACTION

Readings

CERTIFIED

MAYOR'S ACTION

FINAL COUNCIL ACTION

Readings

CERTIFIED

MAYOR'S ACTION

A RESOLUTION BY: *Dehn Staine*

01-R -0216

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE DISTRICT TWO RAIL CORRIDOR ASSESSMENT.

WHEREAS, the City of Atlanta has prepared the District Two Rail Corridor Assessment in conjunction with the Rail Territory of NPU M and N Task Force, which includes representatives from property owners, business owners, residents, and adjacent neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, said Assessment identifies guiding principles for future development; and

WHEREAS, the guiding principles will provide the foundation for the future production of specific zoning regulations for the District Two Rail Corridor; and

WHEREAS, the District Two Rail Corridor represents an opportunity to link adjacent neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, the Rail Territory of NPU M and N Task Force has approved said Assessment; and

WHEREAS, a copy of the study document is hereto attached as Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, the City Council wishes to adopt said Assessment;

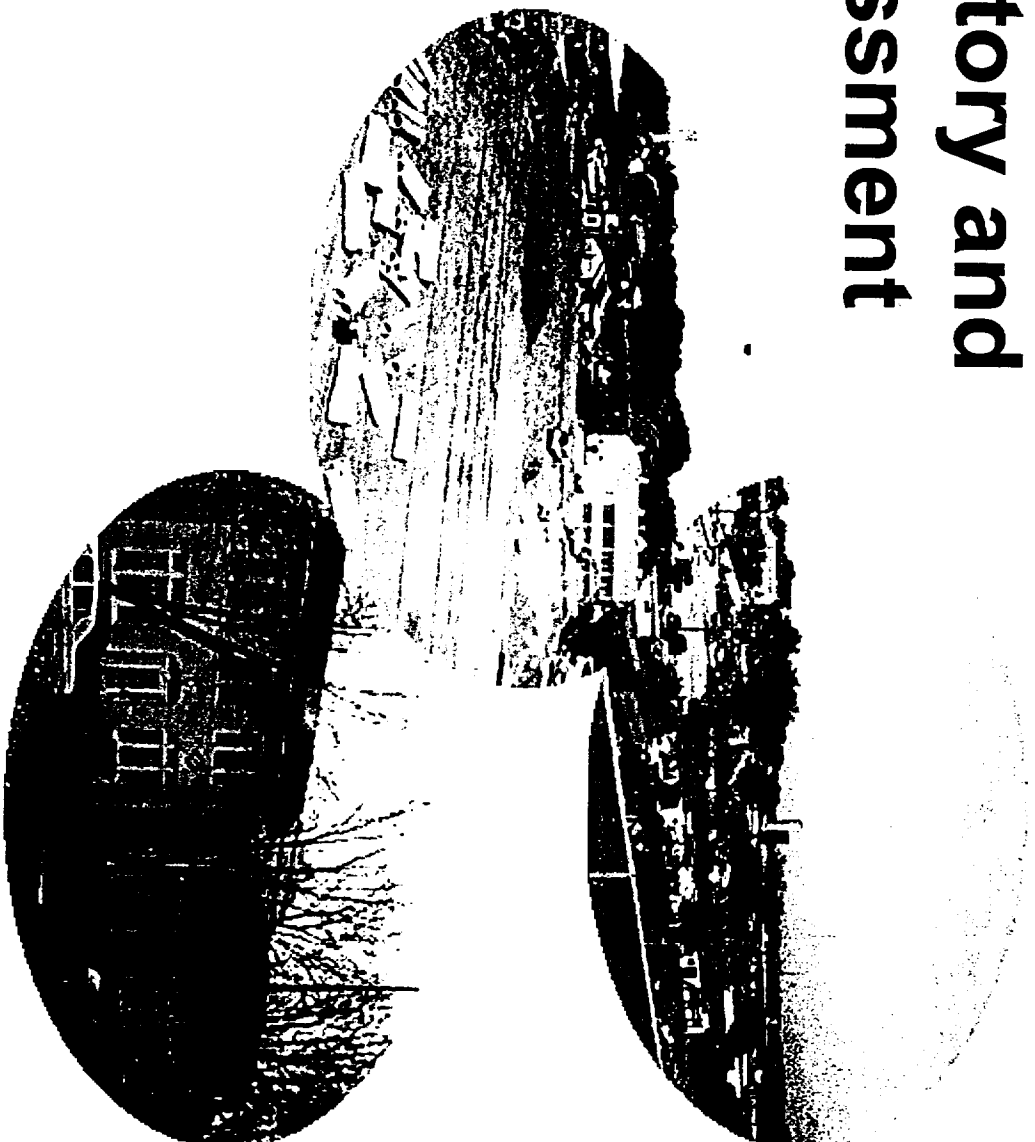
NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ATLANTA, GEORGIA, HEREBY RESOLVES:

SECTION 1: The District Two Rail Corridor Assessment is hereby adopted by City Council.

SECTION 2: All resolutions and parts of resolutions in conflict herewith are hereby rescinded.

District Two Rail Corridor Inventory and Assessment

EXHIBIT A



February 2001

**City of Atlanta
Department of Planning, Development and Neighborhood Conservation
Bureau of Planning**

Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	Page 1
2.0	Existing Conditions	Page 2
2.1	Assessment Area	Page 2
2.2	History	Page 2
2.3	Current Zoning.....	Page 3
2.4	Current 15 Year Land Use Plan.....	Page 4
2.5	Current Land Use	Page 5
2.6	Automobile Access	Page 6
2.7	Historic Street Pattern.....	Page 7
2.8	Transit Access	Page 8
2.9	Street Network Capacity	Page 9
2.10	Brownfields	Page 9
2.11	Sewer Issues	Page 10
2.12	Demographics	Page 11
2.13	Railroad Territory Task Force Summary	Page 13
2.14	City and Civic Projects	Page 14
2.15	Housing Pressure	Page 17
2.16	Commercial Pressure	page 17
2.17	Urban Design Implications.....	Page 18
2.18	Existing Development Permissions	Page 19
3.1	Recommendations.....	Page 20
3.1	Recommendations.....	Page 20
3.2	Task Force Urban Design and Planning Principles	Page 20
3.3	Task Force Urban Design and Planning Strategies.....	Page 21
3.4	Proposed Changes to 15 Year Land Use Plan.....	Page 23
3.4	Next Steps	Page 24

1.1 Purpose of the Inventory and Assessment

The purpose of this inventory and assessment is to examine the large parcels of undeveloped and/or underdeveloped industrial zoned properties along the Norfolk Southern rail corridor within the City of Atlanta Council District Two. This information is intended for use by interested parties, including the Railroad Territory Task Force of NPU M and N, a group of residents, businesses, property owners and elected officials in the Assessment Area. It will provide information that supports efforts to develop a vision and strategy for the long-term development of industrial properties along the rail corridor. When a vision and strategy for the area has been developed, the City of Atlanta Bureau of Planning will assist interested parties in developing official City policy and programs to support such recommendations.

1.2 Organization of the Report

This report is divided into three chapters. Chapter One includes the introduction. Chapter Two defines the Assessment Area and describes the existing physical, social, economic and political conditions along the rail corridor and in the surrounding neighborhoods. It also documents these conditions with the intention of developing a comprehensive understanding of factors in the area. Chapter Three includes recommendations for the future of the Assessment Area.



Figure 1 Existing and former industrial uses line the Norfolk Southern rail corridor.

2.1 Assessment Area

The Assessment Area is located on the east side of the City of Atlanta, approximately one mile east of Downtown. The Assessment Area is located in City Council District Two, the district of City Councilperson Debi Starnes, and straddles Neighborhood Planning Units M and N.

The Assessment Area is defined as the industrial zoned properties located in the area bounded by North Avenue to the north, Moreland Avenue to the east, DeKalb Avenue to the south, and Glen Iris Drive/Randolph Avenue to the west. These industrial areas are located largely alongside late nineteenth century rail line. They are surrounded by the diverse and historic intown neighborhoods of Inman Park, Old Fourth Ward, and Poncey Highlands. See Figure 2.

2.2 History

The rail line that forms the backbone of the Assessment Area was constructed shortly after the Civil War as part of a rail corridor ring around the central city called the Circle Line. This ring allowed trains to bypass the downtown area and provided service to industrial uses that sprung up along its route and utilized rail for material and product transport. With time, trolley neighborhoods were also developed around the rail line. The first such neighborhood, Inman Park, was built in 1889 by Joel Hurt. Following Inman Park, the portions of Old Fourth Ward within the Assessment Area and Poncey Highlands were developed.

Over the years, as the needs of industrial users changed and industry began to move out of the urban core, many of the buildings along the rail line were vacated or converted to less intensive industrial uses such as warehousing. With the loss of these industries and the increased reliance on trucks for the remaining users, the rail line was abandoned, both within the Assessment Area and in the southwest quarter of the rail corridor ring.

In recent years, with an increased desire for intown living many of the formerly vacant industrial buildings along the rail line have been converted into residential lofts, live/work spaces, and office space. The City of Atlanta revised the light industrial zoning category to allow for rehabilitation of buildings built before 1950 into housing to support this. In the process, these buildings have become home to thousands of new residents and created thousands of new jobs.

More recently, as the number of large buildings available for conversion has dwindled, there has been increased pressure to rezone many of the properties within the Assessment Area from industrial uses to commercial or multi-family residential categories to allow for construction of new residential developments. Much of this rezoning has been undertaken in a piecemeal manner, with little regard for the overall transformation of the industrial area into a mixed-use neighborhood asset.

2.3 Current Zoning

Currently, a variety of zoning districts exist within the Assessment Area. However, for the purposes of the assessment the 201 acres currently zoned I-1 (light industrial) and I-2 (heavy industrial) will be examined. Figure 2 shows the location these parcels.

With the exception of the City Hall East property on North Avenue, and a handful of small commercially zoned properties in Inman Park and Old Fourth Ward, single-family residential zoned areas bound all of the Industrial zoned tracts within the Assessment Area. Typically, these residential area are zoned as R4 or R5. In most cases these districts are separated from the industrial zoned parcels by an intervening street, although there are notable exceptions to this along Lake Avenue in Inman Park and Sampson Street in Old Fourth Ward.

Between January of 1998 and July of 2000 seven applications were filed with the City of Atlanta for rezoning from I-1 or I-2 designations to other zoning categories. These include properties at 747 and 821 Ralph McGill Boulevard, 112 and 130 Krog Street, 780 Lake Avenue, 778 Dekalb Avenue, and the Decatur Street/Cornelia Street intersection. These represent 22.3 acres of land. Five of the seven cases were requests for rezoning to C-1 (community business) or C2 (commercial service), one was to PD-MU (planned development mixed use), and one was to RG-4 (residential general). Since July of 2000, other rezoning applications have been made, including one to rezone 6.8 acres at Highland Avenue and Sampson Street to C-3 (commercial residential) for a mixed-use development.

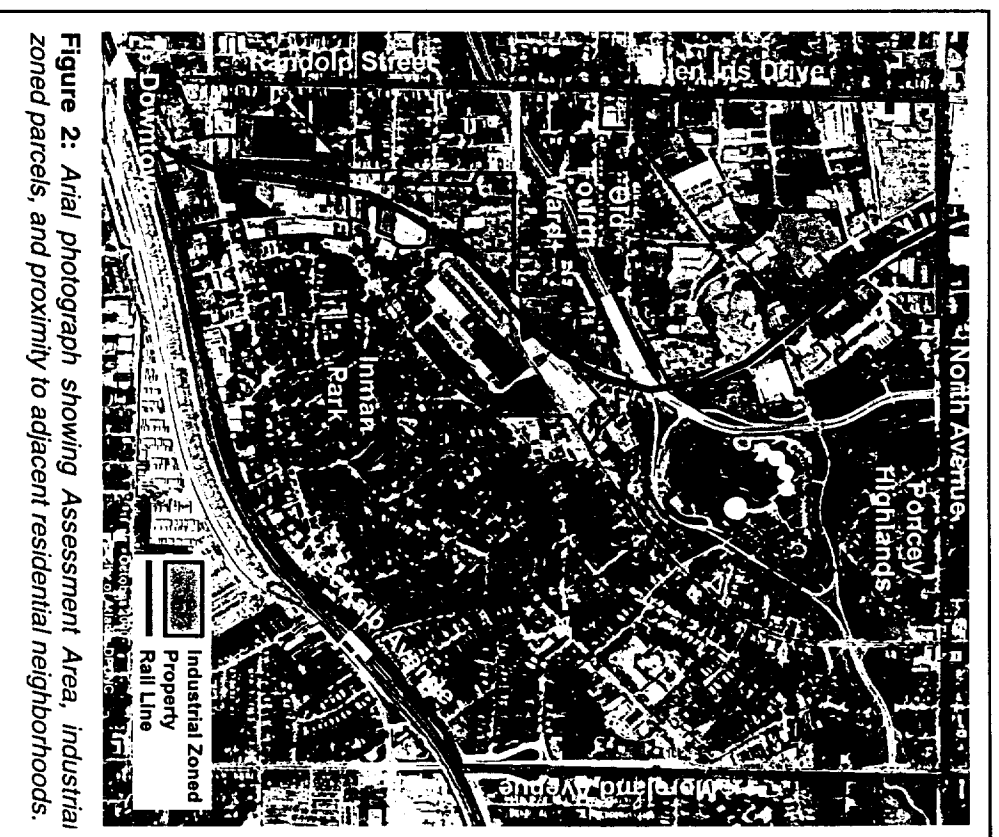
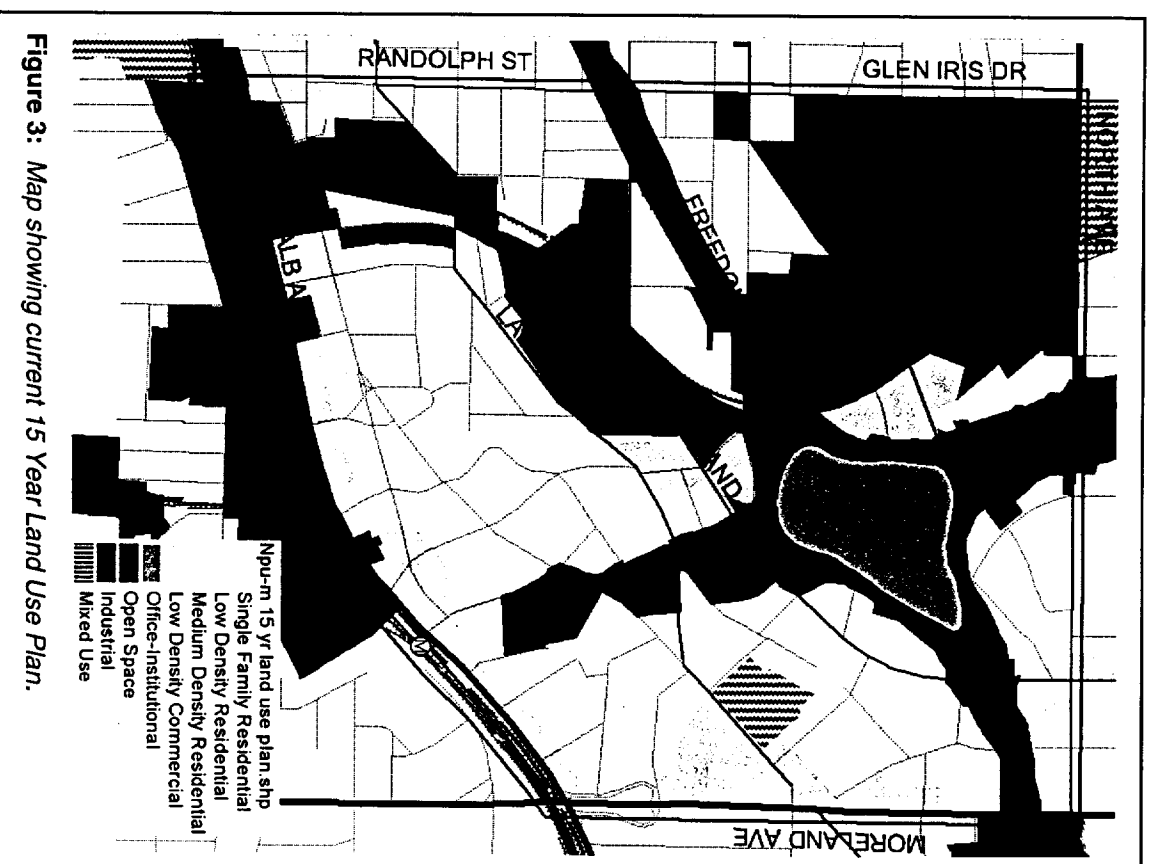


Figure 2: Aerial photograph showing Assessment Area, industrial zoned parcels, and proximity to adjacent residential neighborhoods.

2.4 Current 15 Year Land Use Plan

As part of the City's Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP), the 15 Year Land Use Plan classifications reflect City policy established to support existing or desired future zoning designations. Each land use classification correlates to a set of potential zoning categories that can support such classification and, as such, there should be a general consistency between land use classifications and zoning.

Currently, most of the industrial zoned parcels in the Assessment Area have a land use classification of "Industrial." There are, however, instances of inconsistency between 15-year land use designations and zoning. These inconsistencies, such as the block bounded by North Highland Avenue, Alaska Avenue and the rail line, which is zoned I-2 but in the 15 Year Land Use Plan as Medium Density Residential, reflect a long-term City policy of changing the zoning and redeveloping the parcel into residential uses. See Figure 3.



2.5 Current Land Use

Many of the industrial zoned properties in the Assessment Area are currently used for non-industrial uses. Non-industrial uses permitted in I-1 and I-2 zoning include retail, banks, clubs, churches, restaurants, offices, hotels, and several other uses. Zoning regulations also allow buildings built before 1950 to be converted to multi-family residential uses in I-1 zoned areas. There are no such residential provisions for I-2 designations.

Because certain non-industrial uses are allowed in industrial zoned parcels, the Assessment Area includes several major categories of uses. These include retail/clubs, grandfathered single-family uses, multi-family, offices, and mixed uses. A few large structures within the Assessment Area have been converted to mixed-use loft projects. These include the StudioPlex project on Auburn Avenue and the Stove Works on Krog Street. Table 1 show land use composition based on total parcel area dedicated to the indicated use.

Table 1 Existing land uses

Land Use	Percentage of Total
Single Family Residential	1%
Multi-Family Residential	1%
Civic	2%
Retail/Clubs	2%
Office	2%
Salvage	7%
Industrial	49%
Parking	5%
Vacant	24%

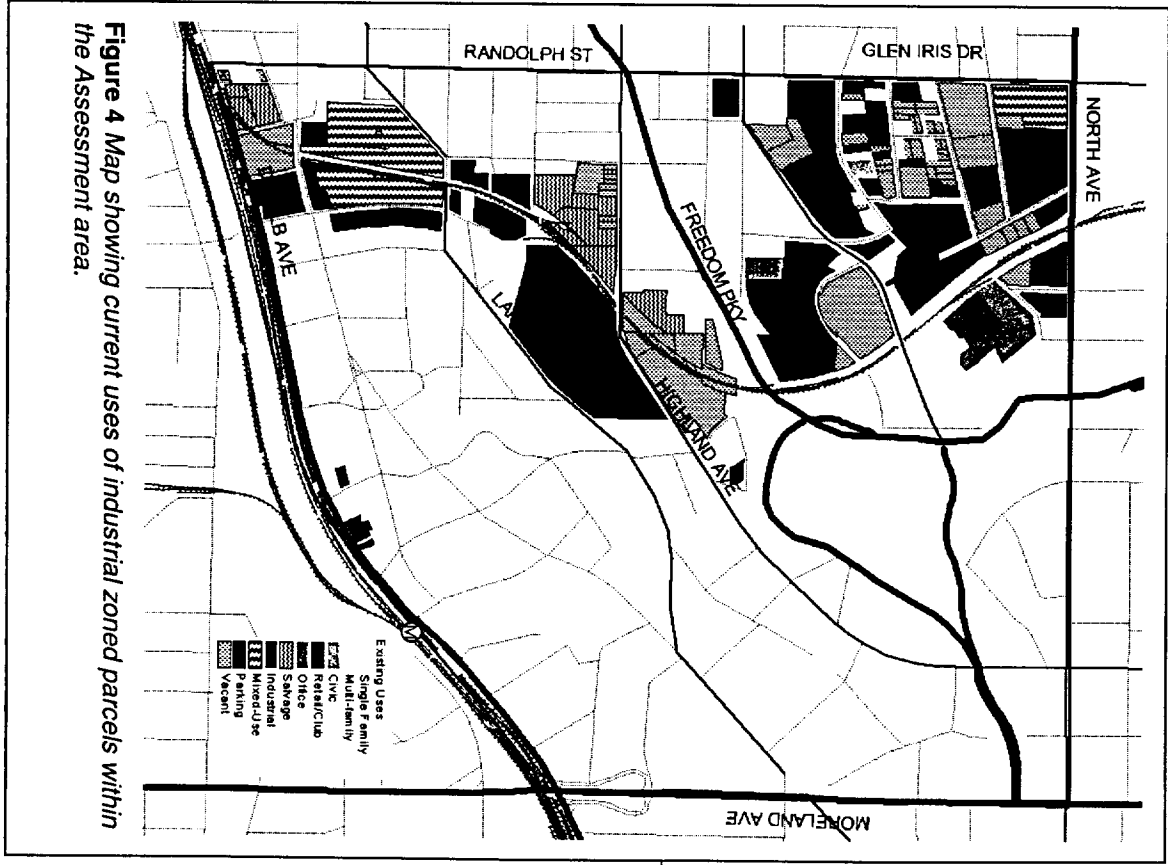


Figure 4 Map showing current uses of industrial zoned parcels within the Assessment area.

2.6 Automobile Access

Owing to their historic dependence on rail the Assessment Area's industrial properties are not well connected to the region's highway network. While Freedom Parkway bisects the Assessment Area and provides access to I-75/85, it can only be accessed via Ralph McGill Boulevard and Highland Avenue. As such, the industrial properties to the south rely on Dekalb Avenue, Edgewood Avenue, Auburn Avenue, Highland Avenue, and Lake Avenue for much of their vehicular access. With the exception of Dekalb Avenue, these are tree-lined streets running through established neighborhoods. As such, future development of these sites could change traffic patterns along these routes.

The City of Atlanta Department of Public Works monitors existing traffic volumes on these routes. They are also classified based on specified data which includes both use and volume. These classifications include highway, arterial, collector and local. Figure 5 shows the City of Atlanta classification for streets in the Assessment Area. As shown, most of the streets are low volume local streets organized in an interconnected street network, and therefore, it is important to recognize that any new development that occurs will likely increase traffic within the area.

Speeding plays a major role in the area's street condition. Dekalb Avenue is known for speeding, but problems also exist on Lake Avenue, North Avenue, Moreland Avenue and Highland Avenue. Recent traffic calming measures, including speed humps and pedestrian bulbouts along

Highland Avenue and Lake Avenue have lessened the problem, but it persists throughout the area.

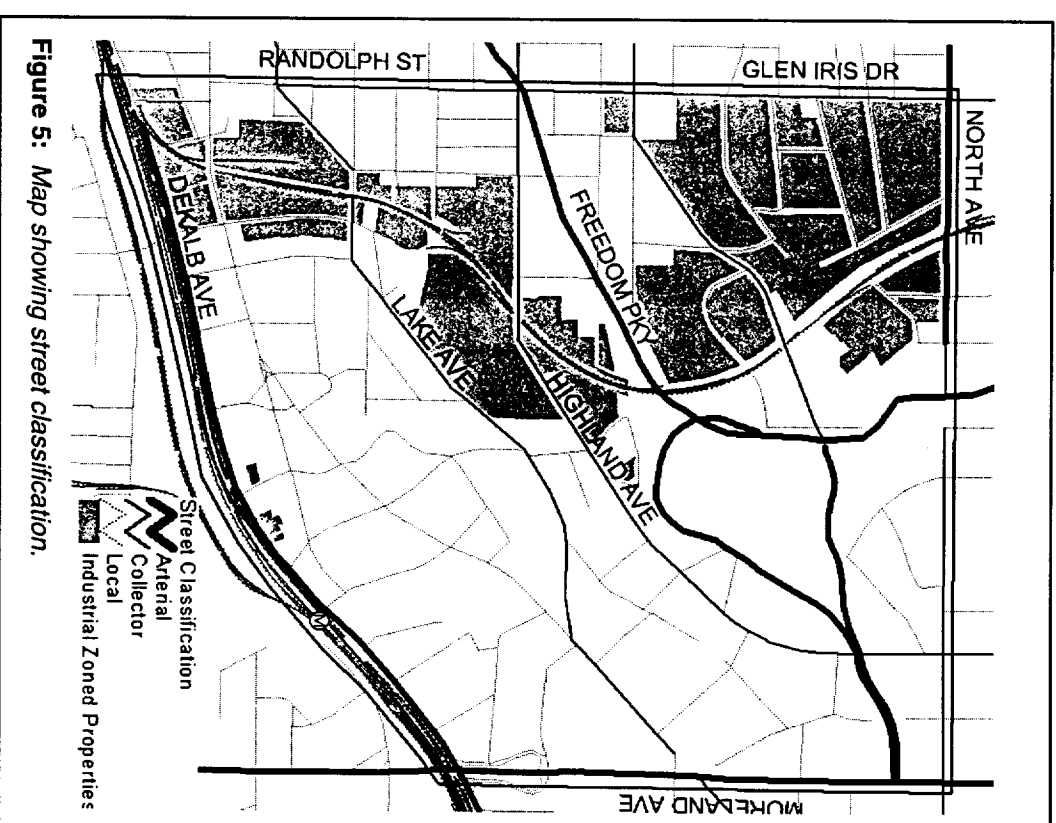


Figure 5: Map showing street classification.

2.7 Historic Street Pattern

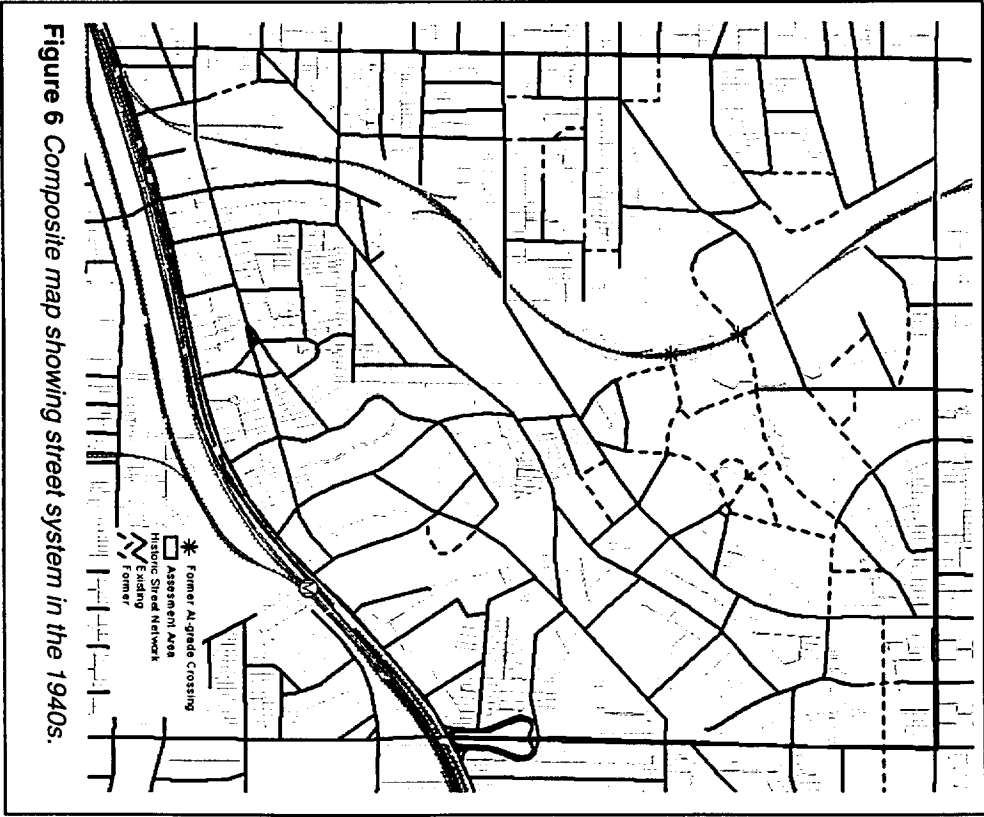
Like many parts of Atlanta, the street system present in the Assessment Area today does not represent the pattern that once existed. At one time, there were many more streets and connections between streets than currently exist. The more extensive street system provided pedestrians and automobiles with many more possible routes than currently exist and often decreased the distance that had to be traveled to access different portions of the Assessment Area.

Figure 6 represents a composite street system approximating that existing in the 1940s. The map was compiled from Sanbourne Fire Insurance Maps dating from 1932 and aerial photographs taken shortly after World War II. In both cases, the streets shown were the same, indicating that there was no change in the street network until some time after that.

The greatest disruption of the street network in the Assessment Area was the result of clearance for the Stone Mountain Freeway and the eventual construction of Freedom Parkway. Many streets and blocks in the vicinity of the present-day Carter Center were removed for a proposed interchange. Smaller areas were also removed to along various legs of the proposed highway.

Streets were also removed with the expansion of industrial uses, particularly in the northwestern portion of the Assessment Area. However, because this area was historically industrial, the number of streets that were abandoned was not great because of the large lot size. The fact that the rail line was built before the

neighborhoods also limited the removal of many street crossings over the rail line, because few ever existed. This said, two at-grade rail crossings on what were unpaved roads were removed.



2.8 Transit Access

Much of the Assessment Area was developed at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. During this time, trolley lines ran along Edgewood Avenue, Highland Avenue, Lake Avenue and portions of Moreland Avenue. With the elimination of the trolley lines in the early twentieth century, buses began running along the same routes and with the same route names as many of the trolley lines. The Assessment Area's industrial parcels lack direct rail transit access today. The Inman Park-Reynoldstown MARTA station on Dekalb Avenue provides the closest service, but at its shortest it is still a three-fourths mile walk from the station to the closest industrial properties. From the farthest properties, the walk is nearly two miles.

Five bus routes serve varying industrial parcels in the Assessment Area. Route #3 serves Auburn and Lake Avenues and connects the to the Candler Park MARTA station, Downtown Atlanta, and Atlanta's west side. Route #16 serves the length of Highland Avenue and connects to Virginia-Highland, Morningside, Old Fourth Ward and Downtown, terminating at the Five Points rail station. Route #17 runs along Dekalb Avenue and connects to several MARTA stations. Route #46 serves Glen Iris Drive, Midtown Atlanta and the Civic Center rail station. Finally, Route #48 serves the Assessment Area but not the industrial zoned parcels. It runs on Moreland Avenue via the Inman Park-Reynoldstown rail station. It also connects the Assessment Area to East Atlanta Village and points south. Headways for these routes range from a frequency of one bus every 16 minutes for Route #6 during rush hour, to one bus every 45 minutes for Route #48 during the evening.

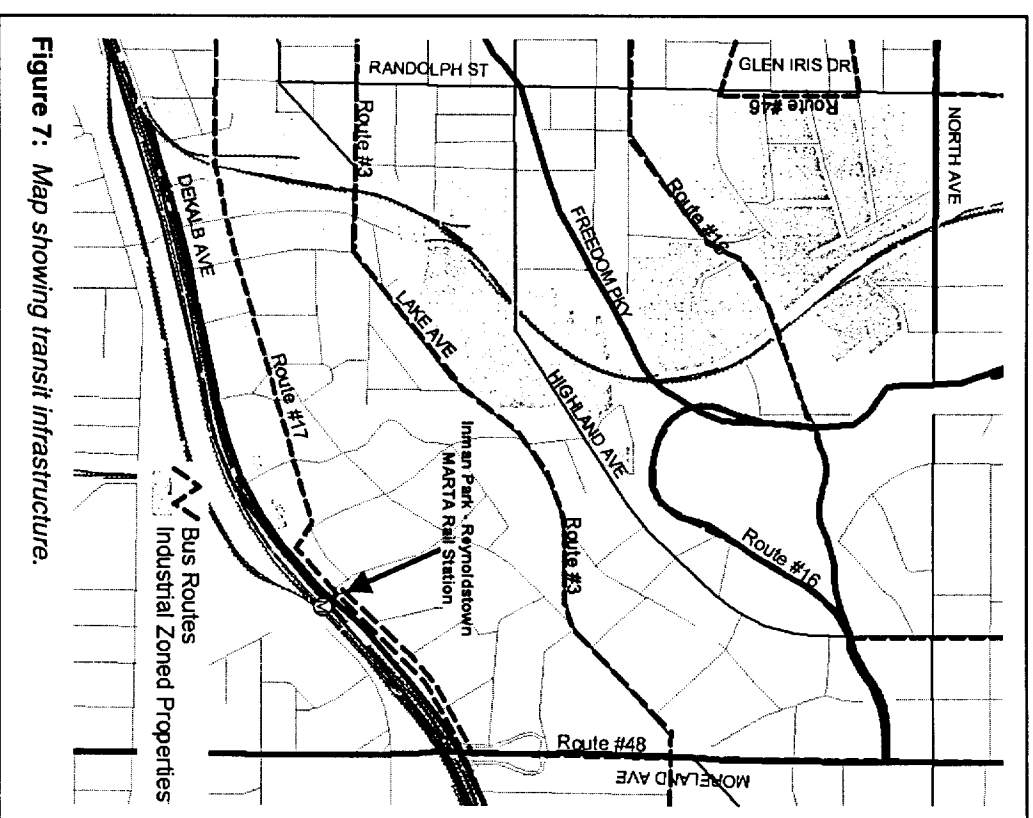


Figure 7: Map showing transit infrastructure.

2.9 Street Network Capacity

If the vacant industrial parcels in the Assessment Area are converted into residential or commercial uses over the coming years traffic will increase. However, given the complexity of traffic generation patterns and the extensive network of inter-connected streets, it is difficult to determine exactly what the impacts of future development will be on traffic flow and capacity.

In areas with inter-connected street systems, traffic is dispersed. This results in low traffic volumes on several streets, as opposed to the high volume that would exist on a single street in a non-connected system. Because of this, critical areas to gauge the impacts of traffic on street on street capacity will occur in areas where the inter-connected system is interrupted by rail lines, highways, or other barriers. In these areas, the few streets traversing such will bear the brunt of traffic.

For streets crossing barriers, as well as all other streets, the number of cars that can be carried is controlled by the operation of the intersections along it. Intersections are where congestion occurs and are the places that determine the number of vehicles that can pass along a given stretch of street. As such, it is critical to examine intersections functioning before existing or future capacity can be determined.

To understand future street capacity in the Assessment Area, a study should be undertaken to determine existing problematic intersections before all else. As part of this, a desirable operation level for these intersections should be established and should balances both vehicular and

non-vehicular transportation needs. Improvements should then be proposed for the varying intersections. Only when such is completed, can a transportation model be developed to understand the impacts of varying development scenarios on the capacity of the street system and intersection operations. Depending on the type of development, this will vary, as different mixes of use and density generate different levels of auto and pedestrian trips throughout the day.

2.10 Brownfields

Brownfield is a term used to describe former industrial properties. Because of the nature of many historic industrial uses, brownfields may be contaminated with materials used in the manufacturing process or, in some cases, with materials illegally dumped on the site at any time during the site's history. As such, it is often difficult to gauge the level of contamination on a site without extensive soil and water analysis.

Former industrial properties within the Assessment Area are all inherently brownfield properties, however there is no way to be sure of the degree of contamination. Some industrial users used little, if any chemicals during the manufacturing process, while other seemingly innocuous users, such as historic dry cleaners, were often the worse offenders.

Water quality in the Assessment Area is also directly impacted by the presence of brownfields. To illustrate, the Assessment Area sits at the head of a watershed; the area where creeks and streams feeding into that watershed originate. The rail corridor in the Assessment

Area was developed adjacent to a creek (long since piped and buried). Any contaminants present have the potential to contaminate water both on site and downstream (an area that extends north to Piedmont Park, through Ansley Park, and eventually to Peachtree Creek).

Future development of these formerly industrial sites must be carefully planned to avoid increasing water contamination risk both at the site and downstream. Factors that increase risk include expansion of the amount of pervious surfaces in areas where contaminants were not remediated (such could allow rainwater to carry contaminants off the site) and retention ponds or other unlined water features that could allow contaminants to leach from groundwater and soil into such features.

Because of the environmental issues associated with brownfield sites, it is important that each site be examined for contaminants prior to redevelopment and that proper steps be taken to remediate contaminants.

2.11 Sewer Issues

The City of Atlanta is in the process of addressing sewer capacity and remediating combined sewer overflows (CSOs). As part of a citywide process, consultants have been hired to evaluate the long-term sewer demand and for given areas based on development potential manifest through the Comprehensive Development Plan 15 Year Land Use Plan and localized area plans. This assessment will use these to project future development

likely to occur in the area. An estimated future sewer demand and capacity requirement will then be calculated based on development potential. Future capacity demands will be used to plan sewer improvements.

Short-term improvements include addressing pipe and flooding problems. Longer-term options deal with CSO remediation and could include the separation of sewage and storm water or continuous use of the existing combined system in which sewage and storm water are conveyed in the same pipe

In a separated system three options are available. Storm water could be retained and cleaned in artificial wetlands. These wetlands could be the focal point of new open spaces and could be connected by creeks approximating former creek beds. In either case, they would likely need to be in topographically low spots. However, wetlands cannot be located on contaminated sites because contaminants can leach into water, as such, this option may not be suitable for much of the Assessment Area. A second option would be to clean separated storm water at an end-of-pipe facility near Piedmont Park or Chattahoochee River. This could be required if wetlands are not feasible. A third option could be a combination of the former two, wherein some storm water is released to feed wetlands, while the rest is cleaned at an end-of-pipe facility.

The final solution for storm water and sewer will depend on neighborhood input and environmental concerns. As part of the process, however, it will be critical to examine historical considerations, impervious surfaces, incentives for on-site treatment, and other approaches.

2.12 Demographics

To understand the area's demographics, an analysis of Census Tracts 16, 17, 29 and 30 was undertaken. While Tracts 17 and 29 are not entirely within the Assessment Area, they are nevertheless critical to understanding the area's population. Tracts 16 and 17 consist of portions of the Poncey Highland, Old Fourth Ward and Bedford Pine neighborhoods. Tract 29 consists of the eastern part of Old Fourth Ward. Tract 30 contains much of the Inman Park neighborhood and Little Five Points. See Figure 7.

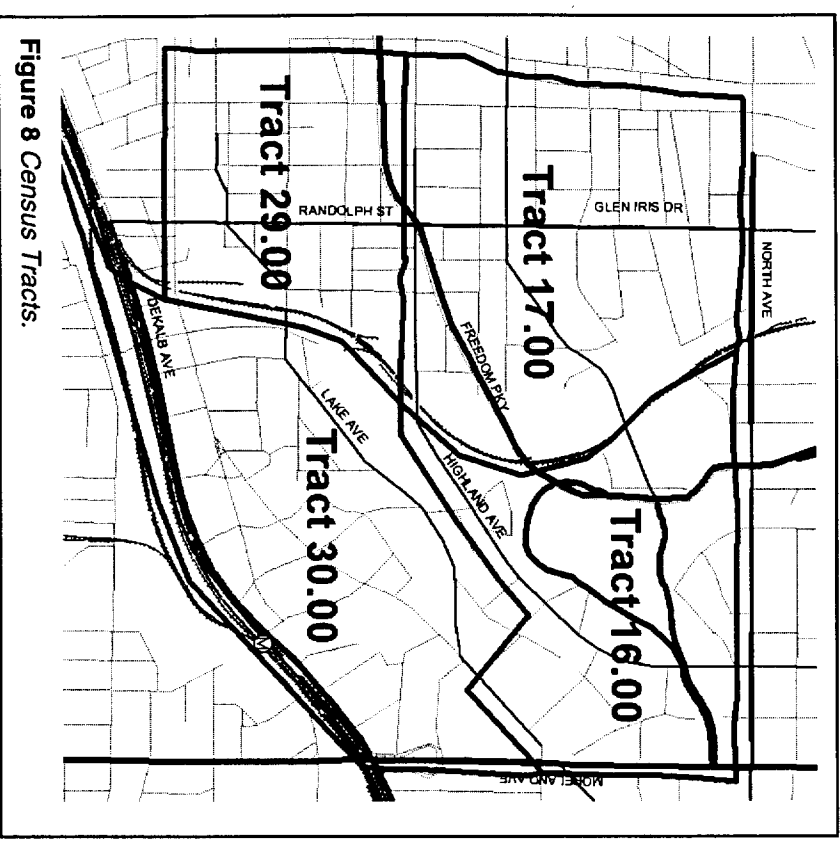


Figure 8 Census Tracts.

The Assessment Area has a variety of incomes and educational levels, with incomes within Tracts 16 and 30 substantially exceeding the city average. In contrast, incomes in Tracts 17 and 29 are extremely low. Tracts 17 and 29 also have higher proportions of elderly residents, residents with lower levels of formal education, and residents with low participation rates in the labor force. Tracts 16 and 30 population is predominately white. Tracts 17 and 29 population is primarily black. The Inman Park, Poncey Highland, Old Fourth Ward, and Bedford Pine neighborhoods have seen a substantial amount of private sector investment, which has helped to revitalize these areas, but has created in some instances a shortage of affordable housing opportunities for lower income residents. See Table 2.

Table 2 Population Characteristics

Indicator/Tract	16	17	29	30	CITY
Population	995	2699	1264	1663	394,017
Households	545	1187	548	840	155,752
% Minority	17.4%	91.4%	95.8%	14.4%	69.0%
HH Poverty Rate	8.1	42.5%	48.3%	3.2%	24.5%
Median HH Income	\$28,092	\$9,849	\$8,636	\$33,365	\$22,275
% Pop < 18 years of Age	10.9%	19.4%	16.1%	13.7%	24.1%
% Pop > 65 years of Age	4.6%	15.7%	27.95	4.4%	11.3%
Unemployment Rate	2.0%	10.0%	24.0%	2.9%	9.2%
Labor Participation Rate	90.2%	52.5%	32.85	90.4%	62.7%
% Population with College Degree Higher	63.95	5.1%	2.0%	57.3%	26.6%
Source: 1990 US Census					

Existing Conditions 2.0

Table 3 1999 ARC City Estimates*

Indicator/Tract	16	17	29	30
Population	1048	2907	1337	1742
Housing Units	629	1472	778	928
Households	545	1187	548	840
Source: ARC				

Table 4 1999 ARC Assessment Area Estimates*

Indicator/Tract	16	17	29	30
Population	1324	3227	1148	1926
Housing Units	816	1667	636	1018
Households	738	1435	472	966
Source: ARC				

Table 5 Absolute and Percent Change 1990-1999*

Indicator/Tract	16	17	29	30
Population	276/26.3%	320/11.0%	(189)/(14.1%)	142/12.4%
Housing Units	187/29.7%	195/13.2%	(115)/(14.8%)	90/9.6%
Households	193/35.4%	248/20.9%	(76)/13.9%	126/15.0%
Source: ARC				

*ARC adjusted 1990 Census counts to reflect the undercount of City of Atlanta

More detailed demographics for the area will not be available until the release of data from 2000 Census. However, anecdotal evidences suggest that that the area is experiencing significant pressure from the intown housing boom in terms of higher demand for existing housing, the conversion of industrial and institutional properties for housing, and infill housing development.

Employment also plays a major role in understanding demographics of the area. According to the ARC, employment within the Assessment Area increased by nearly ten percent between 1990 and 1998. See Tables 6 and 7. The largest absolute increase came within the service industry, accounting for nearly 40% of the 831 new jobs that were created between 1990 and 1998. Most of these new jobs are believed to be associated with the expansion of the Atlanta Medical Center.

TABLE 6: Assessment Area 1998 Employment by Sector

Sector/Tract	16	17	29	30	Total
Construction	54	23	46	100	223
Manufacturing	105	346	78	651	1180
Transp. Comm. Utilities	0	286	56	25	367
Wholesale	13	103	88	93	297
Retail	436	110	13	108	667
F.I.R.E	0	26	9	5	40
Service	115	5026	401	284	5826
Federal Government	110	0	40	3	153
State Government	0	3	0	0	3
Local Government	42	130	199	7	378
Miscellaneous	4	0	1	24	29
Total	879	6053	931	1300	9163
Source: ARC					

TABLE 7: Assessment Area 1990 Employment by Sector

Sector/Tract	16	17	29	30	Total
Construction	54	8	33	51	146
Manufacturing	80	304	104	650	1138
Transportation, Communication,					
Utilities	0	177	68	1	246
Wholesale	1	38	81	147	267
Retail	222	135	27	101	485
F.I.R.E.	3	46	0	27	76
Service	36	4998	314	172	5520
Federal Government	31	0	20	34	85
State Government	0	1	13	0	14
Local Government	78	114	143	2	337
Miscellaneous	0	0	8	10	18
Total	505	5821	811	1195	8332
Source: ARC					

Table 8: Assessment Area % and Absolute Change by Sector

Sector/Tract	1990	1998	Absolute	Percent
Construction	146	223	77	52.7%
Manufacturing	1138	1180	42	3.6%
Transportation, Communication,				
Utilities	246	367	121	49.1%
Wholesale	267	297	30	11.2%
Retail	485	667	182	37.5%
F.I.R.E.	76	40	(36)	(47.3%)
Service	5520	5826	306	5.5%
Federal Government	85	153	68	80.0%
State Government	14	3	(11)	(78.5%)
Local Government	337	378	41	12.1%
Miscellaneous	18	29	11	61.15
Total	8332	9163	831	(10.0%)
Source: ARC				

2.13 Railroad Territory Task Force Summary

The following summarizes historic and existing conditions identified by the Railroad Territory Task Force of NPU M and N. It describes the existing physical setting of the railroad territory and its relationship to the surrounding neighborhoods. It is not intended to be comprehensive. Instead, it focuses on critical features that affect urban design, planning and regulatory decisions. It includes both positive features that can be reinforced and negative features that can be corrected.

Subdivision of Land in Surrounding Neighborhoods.

The neighborhoods surrounding the railroad territory were developed historically with individual lots organized into blocks, surrounded by a dense network of streets that provided access from individual houses to the surrounding city.

Subdivision of Land in the Railroad Territory. The railroad territory was developed historically with individual parcels of land and buildings facing the linear alignment of the railroad, with only occasional connections to local streets that gave access to the surrounding city.

Boundaries Between the Neighborhoods and the Railroad. The historic boundaries between the neighborhoods and the railroad parcels usually occurred along rear property lines. Industry faced the railroad; houses faced the nearby streets, allowing close relationships between places for work, places for commerce and places for living. After World War II, the historic boundaries between railroad-oriented uses and surrounding neighborhoods became less clear as

industrial uses, less dependent on the railroad, moved outward to acquire easier access to city streets leading to regional and national highways.

Lack of Connectivity of Neighborhoods Across the Railroad. Streets crossed the railroad territory only occasionally. These cross streets were limited by the railroad itself and by the topography that defined the gently sloping path of the original railroad alignment. The lack of connections across the railroad contributed to the historic separation of the surrounding neighborhoods and restricted access from different parts of the city.

Historic and Existing Building Types in the Neighborhoods and Along the Railroad. Just as the land parcels are arranged differently in the neighborhoods and in the railroad territory, so are the buildings. Small single-family frame houses occupied the neighborhood edges of the railroad territory. Mill-type industrial buildings, built of brick, occupied the railroad territory. Many houses and industrial buildings remain.

Historic and Existing Land Uses. Just as land parcels and buildings are arranged differently in the neighborhoods and the railroad territory, so are land uses. The neighborhoods are residential, but contain a mix of housing types and densities, along with smaller scale retail, commercial and industrial uses along their edges and along streets connecting to the surrounding city. The railroad territory, although zoned industrial, has historically contained a mix of uses – light and heavy industry, warehousing, a variety of commercial uses, retail, and occasional residential.

Environmental Concerns. Environmental issues are a recent concern in the neighborhoods and the railroad territory. The neighborhoods were, and still are, domestic landscapes made up of front yards, back yards, streets, and sidewalks combined with a maturing tree cover. The railroad territory was a working landscape, made up of industrial and commercial buildings with storage yards, railroad sidings, truck loading spaces, etc. for the movement, production, storage and sale of goods and supplies. The railroad landscape is changing with the decline of industrial and commercial business and the new attraction of the area for a mix of uses, especially residential.

2.14 City and Civic Projects

Within the Assessment Area the City of Atlanta and other organizations have several projects underway including:

Carter Center

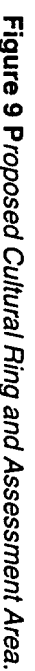
The Carter Center and Carter Presidential Library represent major civic investments within the Assessment Area. The Center is a cultural center, conference center and tourist attraction. It is also the centerpiece of Freedom Park.

StudioPlex on Auburn

StudioPlex on Auburn is a recently completed \$18.3 million complex designed to be an affordable place for artists to live, work, and sell products or services. The project offers 112 residential live/work spaces, 17 large commercial units, and 24 retail galleries in what was formerly an historic cotton compress warehouse. StudioPlex promises to serve as a catalyst for further

Historic District Development Corporation (HDDC) is a community development corporation in Old Fourth Ward whose mission is to direct the overall preservation and revitalization of the King District and surrounding area by restoring the viable, economically diverse and interdependent community that previously existed. To this end, HDDC works with the City of Atlanta and the private sector to improve housing options in the area through both renovation and new construction.

The proposed Cultural Ring is a transit and recreational greenway using portions of the historic Circle Line rail corridor. It provides Atlanta with the opportunity to establish a transportation and recreational system that defines the Atlanta of the twenty-first century. In the short term this transit linkage will likely be quiet, non-polluting buses, but in the long-term options exist for trolleys or light rail transit. By providing linkages that are more direct than the existing street system or transit routes, the proposed Cultural Ring improves mobility for all and enriches Atlanta's neighborhoods. The Cultural Ring presents opportunities in the areas of cultural and historic resources, recreational and multi-use greenway trails, transit systems, strengthening communities, and tourism and economic development.



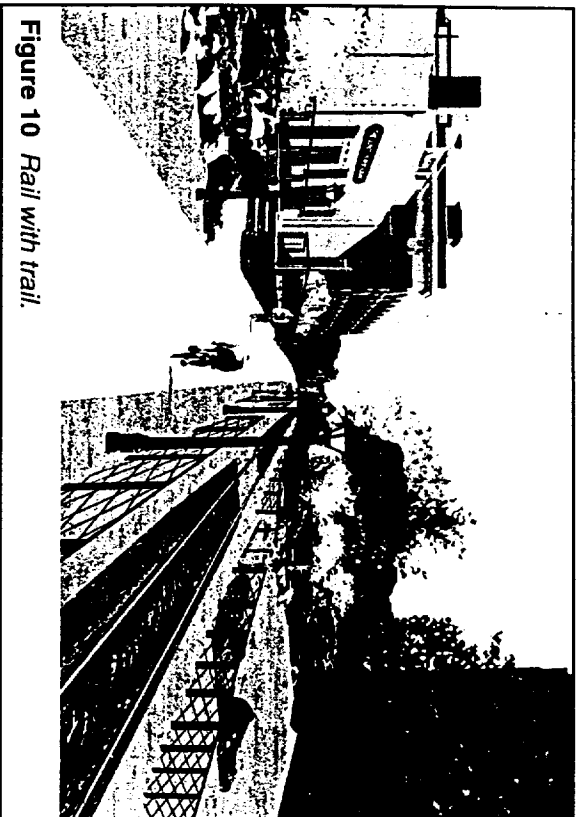


Figure 10 Rail with trail.

Freedom Park

Atlanta's largest park, Freedom Park, is also one of its newest. Currently under development on land cleared for a highway, Freedom Park connects neighborhoods and history, people and culture, environment and progress into a resource for all. When completed, Freedom Park will incorporate trails, picnic areas, site sculpture and plaza entrances for major business and cultural districts.

Freedom Park Trails

The Freedom Park trail project includes several miles of multi-use greenway trails providing bicycle and pedestrian recreational opportunities to many Atlanta neighborhoods. The trails were built and funded by a partnership consisting of the adjacent neighborhoods, the City of Atlanta, the Georgia DOT, and the PATH Foundation.

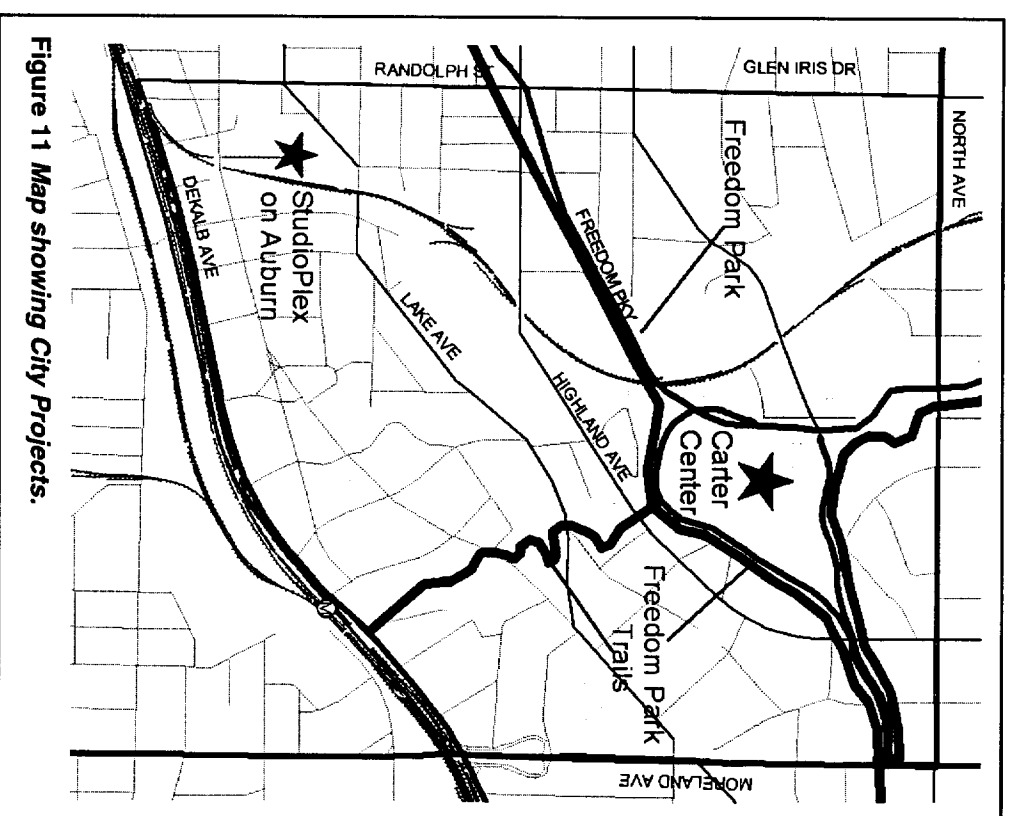


Figure 11 Map showing City Projects.

City of Atlanta Urban Design Policies

The *City of Atlanta Urban Design Policies* is a document that establishes urban design practices which facilitate *smart growth* development. This document will support the Rail Territory Task Force of NPU M and N's recommendations for the Assessment Area.

2.15 Housing Pressure

Currently the City of Atlanta is in the midst of an unprecedented revitalization. After decades of losing residents, the City is gaining new residents as part of a trend that shows no signs of slowing. As a result of this trend, developers have been flocking to previously overlooked parts of the City in search of land to develop into lofts, townhouses, and apartment buildings.

The Assessment Area and other historically industrial areas have experienced a great deal of change as a result of this trend. With their large under-developed parcels, industrial areas have seen the development of new residential projects. Within the Assessment Area, these include Copenhill Lofts on Ralph McGill



Figure 12 *Housing under development on former industrial properties along Dekalb Avenue in Inman Park.*

Boulevard, single family homes in Old Fourth Ward, and lofts conversions. As indicated in Section 2.4, City zoning does not allow for new residential construction in industrial zoned properties. Because of this new developments have required rezoning to proceed.

2.16 Commercial Pressure

With the increased demand for residential space has come an accompanying increase in demand for commercial space within the Assessment Area. Many of the old industrial buildings are attractive locations for office users seeking unique office space. The same can be said for small retailers and art galleries who use renovated industrial buildings for commercial uses.

Commercial demand is also creating pressure to develop new commercial centers on industrial zoned properties within and around the Assessment Area. Commercial uses are permitted by right in industrial zoning and, as such, rezoning applications are not necessary.

Although not in the Assessment Area, industrial land was recently converted into an auto-oriented strip mall on Ponce de Leon Avenue, complete with big box retailers and acres of parking. Developers are also currently seeking more locations for big box stores in intown Atlanta. Developers may view the large industrial parcels in the Assessment Area as prime candidates for such.

2.17 Urban Design Implications

The piece meal manner in which industrial land is converting to residential and commercial uses has a potential negative impact on the long-term quality of the urban environment both in the Assessment Area and the surrounding neighborhoods. Neither current industrial zoning categories, nor RG or C zoning categories have provisions to ensure that new development occurs in a manner which strengthens communities, improves non-motorized transportation options, or promotes high standards of urban design. As a result, developments can be developed in such a manner as to have no relationship to the surrounding urban context.



Figure 13 *Current zoning permits development with no relationship to surrounding neighborhoods such as this area of Peachtree Road in Brookwood Hills.*

Instead of requiring large, formerly industrial areas adjacent to residential neighborhoods to develop as a natural extension of the said neighborhoods, current zoning allows projects to be built which are detrimental to existing neighborhoods. In recent years commercial and residential projects have been developed which place surface parking between buildings and the public sidewalk and which are set back several hundred feet from the sidewalk. This virtually ensures that people will not walk to the projects, the result of which has been to needlessly increase traffic to a greater level than is warranted.

Current zoning also does not require new developments to enhance the public streetscape through façade articulation and pedestrian entrances on the sidewalk. In cases where buildings have been built to the sidewalk, developers are permitted to place blank walls with no doors along the sidewalk. Furthermore, they are also allowed to construct large, peripheral fences between the buildings and the street, which reinforces the lack of sensitivity to the surrounding, un-gated urban environment. In such cases, public pedestrian amenities, such as wide sidewalks and street trees occur as merely an afterthought, if they occur at all.

2.18 Existing Development Permissions

Existing development permissions within current I-1 and I-2 zoning in the Assessment Area also have the potential to be detrimental to the existing character of the surrounding neighborhoods. Existing industrial zoning permits commercial developments to occur with little or no regard for the impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods. Within I-1 and I-2, commercial developments may build to a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of two times the net lot area. This means that, theoretically, the current industrial zoned parcels in the Assessment Area could be developed with 17,500,000 square feet of new office, retail or industrial space. Ironically enough, no new residential space could be developed.

The average number of units per acre for the above-noted rezoning applications has been 23.9. Using an average unit size of 1,250 square feet, this equates to an average FAR of 0.685, or the high end of Residential Sector 3 of the City of Atlanta Land Use Intensity (LUI) Chart.

The implications of the current permitted development potential on the Assessment Area are great. While 17,500,000 square feet of office, retail, or industrial space will likely never be built, even a fraction of that could have negative repercussions on the surrounding neighborhoods, particularly if developed without residential uses.

Many of the recent rezonings in the area have increased potential commercial densities even more. As indicated in Section 2.4, five of the seven rezoning applications made between January 1998 and July 2000 in the area have been for rezonings to C-1 or C-2. While these requests have been largely made to permit the higher residential FAR of 0.696, a rezoning to C-2 would also increase the allowable commercial FAR to 3.0.

3.1 Recommendations

The following chapter includes recommendations from both the Rail Territory of NPU M and N Task Force and the proposed next steps to begin to implement the recommendations.

3.2 Task Force Urban Design and Planning Principles

The guiding principles for redevelopment of the rail corridor were captured in the following urban design and planning principles established by the Task Force. These principles set out guidelines for urban design, planning and regulatory decisions. They are not to be confused with goals. Goals are future conditions to be attained over time by accomplishing a series of objectives. An improved street and sidewalk network, adequate open space and neighborhood-oriented ground floor retail have been identified by the Task Force as the top three goals to be achieved through future development regulations. Planning and Urban Design Principles apply to every decision in the affected territory. Every decision – public or private - affecting the railroad territory in any way is made only after affirming that the decision is in accordance with the guiding principles.

Recognize and Maintain the Identities of Surrounding Neighborhoods. The three neighborhoods that surround the railroad territory - Old Fourth Ward, Inman Park, and Poncey-Highland - have their own identities because of their histories, subdivisions of land into streets and blocks and lots, diverse building types and styles, and people. These neighborhoods should retain their historic, current and emerging identities, as defined

by the neighborhoods themselves and are working on further specificity particularly regarding building heights, setbacks and densities.

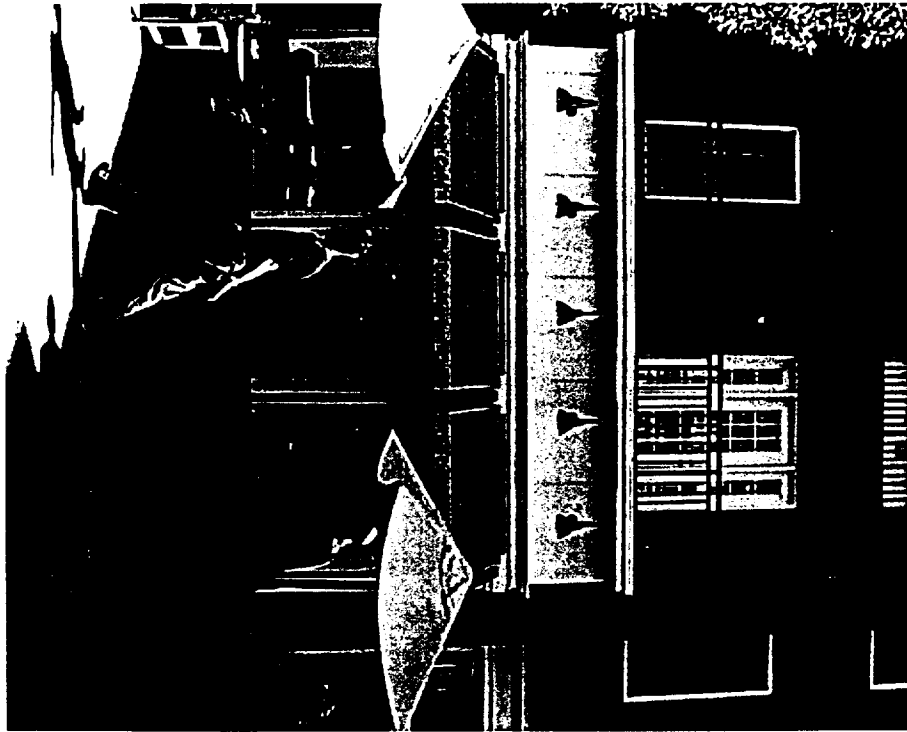


Figure 14 Mixed uses promote walking and lessen auto-dependency.

Recognize and Maintain the Unique Character of the Railroad Territory. The railroad territory has its own character, different from the surrounding residential neighborhoods, because of its industrial history, property ownership organized to serve the railroad, topographic conditions and infrastructure. This character should be retained, which includes both preservation of existing features and taking advantage of new development opportunities.

Design a Framework To Bind Existing Neighborhoods, the Railroad Territory and the Surrounding City Together. The three surrounding neighborhoods have traditionally been separated from the railroad territory because of the railroad itself, topographic conditions, and historic development patterns. These neighborhoods should be connected to each other, to the railroad territory, and to the larger surrounding city by a carefully designed framework of streets, sidewalks, paths, and infrastructure in public rights of way. A framework for the railroad territory, made up of streets and blocks and lots, should provide a setting for diverse uses, building types, and densities.

Mix Types of Uses and Types of Buildings In Future Development In the Railroad Territory. The surrounding neighborhoods are mostly residential, including single-family houses, duplexes and apartment buildings, with a few storefront buildings mixed in. The railroad territory historically had mostly industrial and commercial uses in various building types, sizes, and densities, with a lot of vacant land used for outdoor storage and transportation. This historic mix of uses and building types should be a model for future development

within the framework of streets and blocks and lots. Diverse uses and diverse building types can allow for future development that is profitable and affordable as it is built over time.

Develop the Railroad Territory In Ways That Are Environmentally Sensitive and Sustainable. The railroad territory presents an opportunity to develop in a sustainable way to protect the environment – especially storm water management, to steward the land – especially major topographic features and mature hardwood vegetation, and to build infrastructure and buildings for the future, not just the present.

3.3 Task Force Urban Design and Planning Strategies

This section sets out urban design and planning strategies consistent with the guiding principles. These strategies set out the directions for more detailed urban design, planning and policy studies for the railroad territories as a whole or for individual development parcels.

Expand Public Uses of the Railroad Right of Way. Preserve the linear railroad right of way and expand its uses to maintain and reinforce its historic importance. In addition to Amtrak and commuter rail service, create opportunities for a pedestrian/bicycle path, a linear park and greenway, incorporating natural storm water management, local streets for access, and recreation spaces.

Make Public Spaces and Places Along the Railroad Right of Way. Maintain and reinforce the railroad right of way by preserving appropriate historic or architecturally significant buildings, allowing new development to be higher density than the surrounding neighborhoods, and by requiring new buildings to front onto the railroad right of way and path/linear park as well as the surrounding neighborhood streets.

Develop Former Industrial Properties to Compliment Surrounding Single Family Neighborhoods. Design the edges of new developments on the railroad territory to protect and improve the single-family character of adjacent neighborhoods. This includes limiting building heights across from R-4 or R-5 neighborhoods, requiring front yards in certain areas to match single family neighborhoods across the street, limiting building density in terms of dwellings per acre and floor area ratio, and limiting uses of new development along neighborhood edges to compliment the existing neighborhoods.

Increase Connectivity Across the Railroad. Multiply the number of streets crossing the railroad. This includes re-opening of former railroad crossings where appropriate and making new connections where possible to connect future railroad developments to the surrounding neighborhoods and city with a dense network of streets for pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles and bus transit.

Connect New and Existing and New Streets and Blocks. Build new streets and make blocks to provide multiple access routes between the surrounding city and neighborhoods to new development and to the

path/linear park along the railroad right of way. Existing and new streets should be designed for equal use by pedestrians, bicycles, and automobiles, including traffic calming, on-street parking, sidewalks, street landscaping and lighting.

Conceal Parking, Utilities and Service Areas. Use the interior of blocks – the areas away from both railroad frontages and neighborhood frontages – for surface parking, deck parking, parking access drives, loading docks, sanitation, and utility infrastructure.

Encourage Mixed Uses. Develop mixed uses in new developments and existing buildings to compliment the surrounding neighborhoods. This includes residential, retail, institutional and low-impact industrial and commercial uses. Mixing uses provides a broad range of jobs, enables walking and biking to replace use of automobiles, and distributes traffic throughout the day and week.

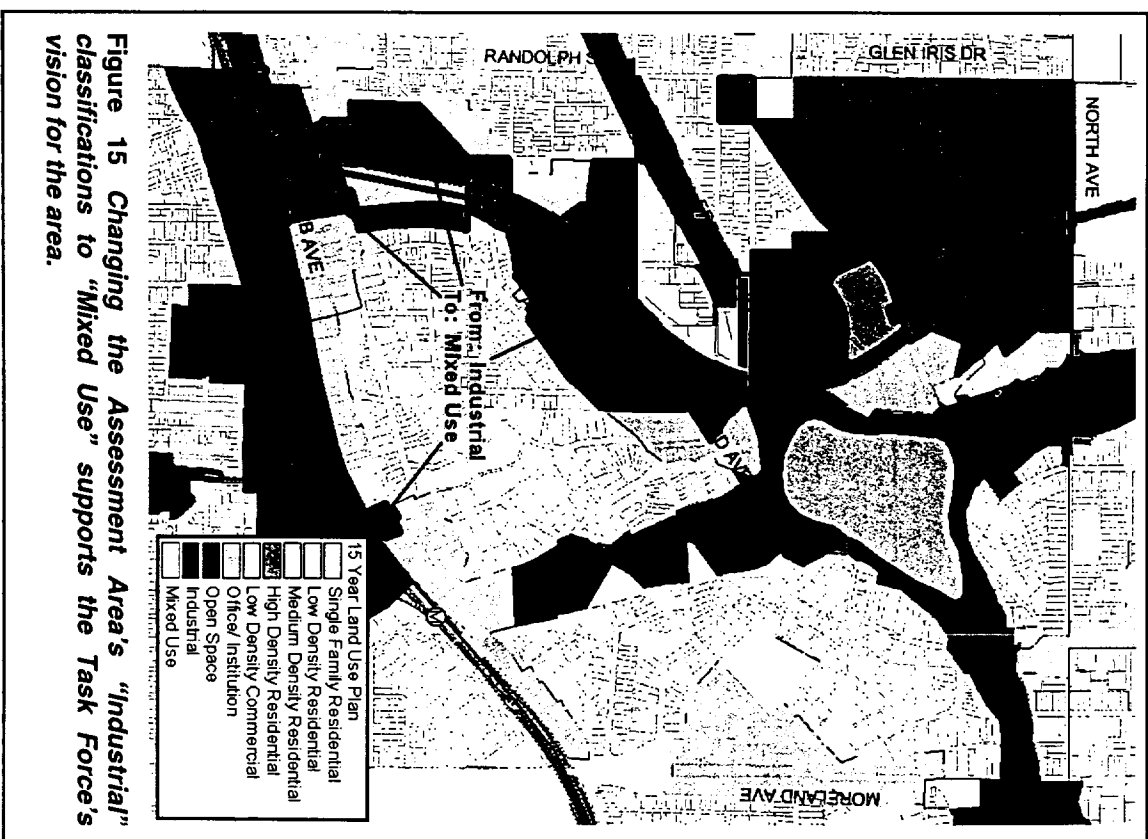
Create Design Guidelines for New Development. Incorporate design guidelines similar to the current City of Atlanta Neighborhood Commercial District guidelines for all new development in the railroad territory.

Encourage Sustainable Development. Develop all new projects following sustainable design principles, including travel alternatives to the automobile, natural storm water management, appropriate energy conservation measures, and appropriate landscape preservation and replacement to enable urban wildlife ecologies.

Allow Responsible Building Densities. Determine allowable density for future development in creative ways, respecting the economic value of the land and the necessity for complementing the surrounding neighborhoods. The acceptable range of maximum densities is between 0.696 FAR, which is the currently allowable residential density for C-1 and C-2 zoning, and 2.00 FAR, which is the current maximum density for existing railroad territory parcels zoned I-2. The National Linen project in the railroad territory falls within this density. The maximum allowable density should be no greater than 2.0 FAR, which is the currently allowable density for the I-2 zoning in the area. Increase from .696 should be based on a formula of density bonuses for project improvement that mitigate the increased density, including developer built streets, public easements, affordable housing, innovative storm water management, etc.

3.4 Proposed Changes to 15 Year Land Use Plan

The Comprehensive Development Plan's 15 Year Land Use Plan establishes policies that support the long-term vision of a given area of the City of Atlanta, including those affecting zoning, infrastructure improvements, and open space conservation, among other things. The map at right shows proposed changes to the 15 Year Land Use Plan which support the long-term vision for the Assessment Area established by the Task Force. These changes also will support zoning designations consistent with such regulations and include changing all parcels in the Assessment Area currently classified as "Industrial" to "Mixed Use".



3.5 Next Steps

Several steps remain to be taken before the Task Force's vision can become a reality. First, the proposed land use changes will need to be enacted. Second, zoning regulations for the subject industrial properties will need to be created and applied to individual properties. Next steps include establishing goals for infrastructure improvements such as, transportation, water and sewer and open space improvements, and encouraging proper design of future development by promoting the Task Force's urban design planning principles and strategies. This document will be used to guide both City-initiated rezoning efforts and proposals by potential developers. It will also be used to support other policy initiatives consistent with the identified Urban Design and Planning Strategies.